

*N. 53*  
REASONS

Humbly Offered by the

GOVERNOUR,

Assistants,

And FELLOWSHIP of

*Hull*  
Eastland = Merchants, *K.*

Against the giving of a General LIBERTY  
to all Persons whatsoever to Export the

ENGLISH

Woollen-MANUFACTURE

Whither they PLEASE.

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L O N D O N :

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**R E A S O N S** humbly offered by the Governour, Assistants, and Fellowship of Eastland Merchants, against the giving of a general Liberty to all Persons whatsoever to export the English Woollen-Manufacture whither they please.

**I**T was the observation of a great Man in his time, that the ill Success which did attend Princes and States in their great Affairs, did generally arise through the mistake of that which was their true Interest; and certainly of all Errors in Judgment, that which relates to a Man's Interest, where it has been mistaken, has been ever observed to be of a most fatal Consequence; for as it is natural for every thing to tend to its proper Centre, so it is as natural for every Man to pursue (tho' by different ways and means) that which he apprehends to be his proper Interest; wherein if he happen to be mistaken, what can follow? But instead of applying himself to that which is his real advantage, he manytimes persueth with his utmost Endeavours, that which in the issue proveth the direct contrary.

That they are under a mis-apprehension of this nature, who do assert that a general Liberty to all Persons to export our *Woollen-Manufacture* where they please, will conduce much to the interest of the Nation, under a supposition that it will encrease the vent thereof; we humbly apprehend will be clearly evident upon the following considerations; which (as in duty bound) we submit to the Judgment of our Superiours.

1<sup>st</sup>. We affirm, That a General Permission of Exportation (as before mentioned) will be a means to debase the Reputation of our *English-Manufacture*, and consequently  
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render it less desirable and sought after abroad.

2ly. It will overthrow all the Incorporated Companies of Merchants in *England*, as the *Hamburgh*, the *Russia*, (though established by Act of Parliament) the *East-Land*, the *Turkey*, the *East-India*, and the *African*; the Mischiefs consequential upon which, will be as followeth, viz.

1. The Trade of *England* will thereby be lost as to the *English*, and come to be all, or at least wise the greatest part, in the hands of Forreigners; as it formerly was, before the said Companies were erected.
- 2ly. All the Priviledges obtained by the said Companies from the Princes, States, and Governours of the places of their respective Residences (which are of great advantage to the vending of our *English-Manufacture*) will be utterly lost.
3. The Navigation of *England* by degrees will be very much impaired, and discouraged.
3. Lastly, to name no more, a general Permission will be so far from answering the End proposed by it, of vending a greater quantity of our *Woollen-Manufacture* than was before; that in all probability, it will in the end prove the contrary, and be the occasion of vending a great deal less.

The proving of which several Particulars we shall undertake in Order, viz.

1. For the first, that a general Permission will be, a means to debase the reputation of our *Manufactures* abroad, and render them less desirable; will appear as followeth, viz.

The trade of the *Manufacture* being now chiefly in the management of Regulated Companies, it is both their Care and their Interest that the said *Manufacture* be not debased in its worth, whereby it may come to

a dis-esteem abroad; which general Traders will never be mindful of.

The appointing set times of Shipping will be prevented, which (tho' now dis-used) yet hath sometimes been found necessary, by regulated Companies, in order to bring the *Manufacture* into an esteem again, when by an Exportation of much more, than the Market could take off, it became unvendible, and a Drugg.

A General Permission letteth in all sorts of ignorant Traders, who for want of Judgment in the said *Manufacture*, know not how to make choice of such which are proper for the Market, and when they have them there, are forced many times by their necessities to sell them to loss, whereby our *Manufacture* cometh to be undervalued, and our Nation greatly prejudiced, an instance of which, we find recorded as followeth, viz.

The *English* in the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth* had for a good while together, a profitable Trade, and good Sales for their *English Manufactures* at *Narvie*, in the *Baltick Sea*, until at length, in the year 1565, a number of stragling Merchants and unskillful Traders resorted thither out of this Realm with their Commodities; by which means, in a little while, the Trade which before was good, was utterly spoiled, inasmuch, that many of them went about the Town with Cloth upon their Arms, and a Measure in their Hands, and sold the same by the Arfine (a Measure of that Country) to the great embasing of that excellent Commodity, the discredit of our Nation, and the fatal impoverishment, and utter undoing of the said stragling Merchants; all which being made known to her Majesty, and her Privy-Council, Order was taken at the next Parliament, that the Town of *Narve* (then under the jurisdiction of the *Muscovite*) should be comprized within the Charter of the *Russia Company*,

ny, to prevent the like evil kind of dealing for the future, and making vile the principal Commodity of the Nation. And it was so done accordingly by Act of Parliament, which one instance amongst others, is sufficient to evidence, that a general permission of Exportation to all Persons, will be an occasion of bringing our *Manufacture* into a dis-esteem; which was our first Reason.

2. A General Permission will overthrow all the incorporated Companies of Merchants of *England*; the evil Consequences of which will be

1. That the trade of *England* will thereby in time be lost as to the *English*, and come by degrees into the hands of Forreigners.

The Trade of this Nation was formerly (as it were intirely) in the Forreigners Hands. viz. The Members of the *Hans-Towns*, who were incorporated into a Society, by the name of the Merchants of the *Dutch-Hans*, and had many Priviledges and Immunities granted them by the Kings and Princes of this Realm, and amongst others a *Guildhall*, afterwards called the *Steel-yard*, for the better carrying on their said Government, as appeareth by a Charter granted to them in the twenty third year of *Henry* the Third; but more especially by another Charter granted to them in the forty fourth year of the said King *Henry* the third, and that General Charter to forreign Merchants, granted by King *Edward* the First, in the 3<sup>d</sup> H. Year of His Reign.

About the time of King *Henry* the 4<sup>th</sup> the *English* began to Trade themselves into the East-parts, at which the Easterlings or Merchants of the *Dutch-Hans*, were so offended, that they took several of their Ships and



and Goods, and offered them several other Injuries, which occasioned great Complaints and Differences between the said King *Henry* the 5<sup>th</sup>. and *Coutrads de Junigen*, then Master General of the *Dutch* Order in *Prussia*, with the *Fians* Townes: And divers *Embassies* passed betwixt them, on that Account, the Result of which in short was this, that the said King *Henry* the 4<sup>th</sup>. finding by the said Priviledges granted to Forreigners, his own Subjects ( to the great Prejudice of the Realm ) very much crippled in their Trade ; did revoke such parts of the Priviledges of the aforesaid *Dutch* Company, as were inconsistent with the carryeing on of a Trade by the Natives of this Realm, and for the better Encouragement of his owne Subjects, did in the 5<sup>th</sup>. Year of His Reign, grant his first Charter to the Merchants Trading into the *Eastland*, containing many great Priviledges, and Immunities, as by the said Charter may appear ; which having a good effect to the bringing of the Trade much more into the hands of the Natives of this Realm than was before, King *Edward* the 4<sup>th</sup>. for their more Ample Encouragement, did in the Second Year of His Reign, grant another Large Charter, to the Merchants of *England*; especially to those Residing in the *Nether-Lands*, with several additional Immunities and Priviledges, as by the Charter at Large may appear.

In the 1<sup>st</sup>. and 2<sup>d</sup>. of *Philip* and *Mary*, was granted the Charter to the *Russia* Company, afterwards confirmed by Act of *Parliament*, in the 8<sup>th</sup>. Year of Queen *Elizabeth*.

Until whose time, tho' the Trade of this Nation was driven much more by the Natives thereof, than had been formerly, yet had the Society of the *Dutch-Hans*, at the *Steele-Tard*, much the advantage of them,  
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by means of their well regulated Societies, and the priviledges they enjoyed, insomuch that almost the whole Trade was driven by them, to that degree, that Queen *Elizabeth* Her Self when She came to have a War, was forced to buy the *Hemp, Pitch, Tarr, Powder* and other *Naval* Provisions, which She wanted of Forreigners, and that too, at their own Rates; nor was there any Stores of either in the Land to supply her occasions on a suddain, but what at great Rates She prevailed with them to fetch for Her, even in time of War; they being strangers not regarding the Interest of the Nation, and Her own Subjects, being as then but very little Traders: To remedy which, She fell upon the consideration, how She might at home have a well-grounded dependance, to have those necessary Commodities by Her, that so She might not want them, when She most needed them; and after great deliberation, no better Expedient could be found, by the said Queen, and Her Council, than by encouraging her own Subjects to be the *Merchants*, which She did, by erecting out of them several Societies; of *Merchants*, as that of the *East-land Company*, and other *Companies*, by which means, and by cancelling many of the Priviledges of the forementioned *Dutch-Hans* Society, the Trade in General, by degrees came to be managed by the Natives of this Realm, and consequently. the Profit of all those Trades accrewed to the *English* Nation; Trade in general, and *English* Shipping was encreased, Her own Customes vastly augmented, and what was at first the great End of all obtained, *viz.* That She had constantly, lying at home, in the hands of Her own Subjects, all sorts of Naval Provisions and Stores, which She could make use of, as Her occasions required them, without any dependance on Her Neighbours for the same.

And



And thus by the means of the Erecting the fore-mentioned Societies, and Preserving and Encouraging that of the *Merchant-Adventurers*, was the Trade at first gained from Forreigners to the Natives of this Realme, to its Inestimable Advantage; and by the same means hath been hitherto in great measure preserved; but if these Societies should be overthrown, as they will certainly be, by a general Liberty granted to all Persons, both Strangers and others, to carry our *Woollen-Manufactures* to the places of their respective Priviledges, the Trade will again by degrees be lost to the *English*, and fall into the hands of Forreigners; since it is clearly evident, that the Trade of *England*, to the Natives of this Realm, can by no other ways be preserved, than by the same method it was at first obtained, *viz.* the Supporting the severall and respective Societies of *Merchants*, in their Priviledges and Immunities.

2dly. The next Mischiefe that will follow upon the overthrow of the respective Companies, consequential upon a General Permission, is this; that all the beneficial Priviledges obtained at the hands of the Princes and Governours of the respective Places of their Residences will be utterly Lost, to the very great disadvantage of the Vending of our English *Manufacture*, and this is so apparent, that it needeth no enlargement; for if the Companies fall, their Priviledges must necessarily fall with them, and tho' obtained at the Intercession of our Princes, and at the great expence and sollicitations of the said Companies, yet if a General permission be granted to all persons to Trade to the places of their Priviledges, they will be forthwith looked upon, but under the notion of general Traders, and their Priviledges, which in some Places are greater than those Princes own Subjects enjoy, will be by them gladly  
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celled, and re-assumed, which is so apparent to every Mans reason, that we shall add no more about it.

3. The last mischief mentioned arising by the overthrow of the Companies, of which a General Permission to trade to the places of the Priviledges is a necessary consequence, is this, That the Navigation of *England* will by degrees be thereby much impaired, and this is almost as apparent as the former; for it is a certain Maxim, that the encrease of Navigation followeth the encrease of Trade; and if the Trade of *England* fall into the Hands of Forreigners, as it will in a little time do,) by the discouragement of *English* Merchants, the Navigation of *England* must likewise in time decay; for it has been always observed that the Forreigner will not make use of *English* Shipping if he can have any other, for besides his National, his Personal Interest leadeth him to the contrary, in as much as he can have his Goods carried at cheaper Rates in forreign Shipping, who can, and do Sail at much easier Charge than our *English*, and so our Navigation by degrees will be much impaired.

3. We come now to the third and last reason that a General Permission will be so far from gaining the end proposed by it, that in all Probability it will in the event prove the contrary, which if we make out, (as we hope we shall) by reason, and that backed by the experience of former and latter times: It will then (we presume) be satisfactory to all disinterested Persons, that a General Permission will be no ways for the good, but much to the prejudice of this Nation.

In order to the proof of which we shall lay down this as a sure Maxim, *that it is not the quantity of Woollen-Manufacture exported, but what the Markets abroad are able to take off, and those Nations expend; which is the true Rule, by which our measures must be taken, as to the expence of our English Manufacture.*

For instance, If in one year there should be twenty thousand Cloths sent unto a Place whose Markets and expence will take off but ten Thousand; Will the Expence of our *Manufacture* be ever the larger for that great Exportation? No, for the other ten Thousand must lye undisposed of, for the expence of the next year, so that by how much the more *Manufacture* was sent the first Year, there will be so much the less sent the next, and so from year to year, accordingly as the expence requires it; unless it can be supposed that the Merchant will still be sending out, without consideration had of his selling abroad, which, as it is irrational to suppose, so it is impossible to be, done without an unexhaustable stock. By which it appeareth, and is clearly evident, That a general Permission may well change the hands of the Exporters, but can never encrease the expence of the *Manufacture*.

Nor can the Companies of Merchants, as such, lessen; or the general Permission, encrease, at the said Exportation, but in one of these three cases, *viz.*

1. Either first, if the said Companies should make any By-Laws amongst themselves, to limit the Exportation of the said *Manufactures*, in order to advancing of it in Price. This we must confess, would be a hindrance to its Expence; but we can, and do aver, that there is not, nor ever was, that we know of in ours or any of the said Companies, any By-Laws to limit or restrain the Exportation.

Or 2<sup>dly</sup>. If the Members of the said Companies, as particular *Merchants* should make a combination among themselves, that they would not Transport above such a number of Clothes in such a time, or sell them under such a rate, that so their Price might be advanced: But this considering the great numbers of Persons in the several Companies, & their different

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particular Interest, ( all which must be comprised in such a Combination ) is Morally Impossible ; and is that which never was, nor can be done.

3. Or Lastly, if the *Merchants* of the respective Companies, have not sufficient stock to take off as much of our *Manufacture*, and send it to the respective places of their Residence, as those Markets are capable of Vending; but that this is not so, we may with modesty affirm since it is well known, that the *Merchants* of the respective Companies, have Stocks sufficient to carry off five times as much of our *Manufacture*, as the several Countries to which they Trade, can, or will vend.

So that the *English Merchants*, being neither disabled through want of Stock, nor hindered by any By-Law, nor engaged in any combination among themselves, to send less of our *Manufacture* to the places of their respective Trades, than the Markets in those places will take off, and vend; it may reasonably be concluded, that the *Merchant* would be glad to send double the quantity they now do, if they could find a vent for it, it being so much their Interest as to Profit, to increase their Trade: *And that a General Permission, ( as was before intimated ) may change the hands of the Exporters, but cannot in any wise increase the exportation it self;* but instead thereof by the means of over glutting the Markets, they are many times put upon a necessity of selling to loss, by which inconvenience, together with many other, if we will believe the experience, both of former Ages, and latter times ; a General Permission hath brought our *Manufacture* into such dis-esteem, as hath much lessened the exportation of it, to what it was before.

Two instances whereof, one of former Ages, and the other of latter times, we shall crave leave to offer, which we presume will sufficiently clear up the truth of what has been alleadged.

In the 29th. Year of *Queen Elizabeth*, the *Wool-Sellers Clothiers*, and others living upon the *Woollen-manufacture* finding them-



themselves grieved for want of sufficient vent for the same made their Complaint to the Queens Majesty, and her Council, and did assign the same Cause as is now pretended, *viz* The Monopoly of the several Companies, and by that a want of Permission for all Persons, both Natives and Forreigners to buy it up, and send it abroad ; upon which it was then supposed that the only Remedy to cure this evil, would be to give Liberty to all Persons, both her Highness's Subjects, and Forreigners to buy, and transport Cloth, and other *Woollen-Manufactures* when, and where they pleased ; and accordingly a general Permission was granted , and they were enabled thereunto by Letters Pattents from her Highness, directed to the then Lord-Treasurer, with a *non obstante* to the Companies Charter, and that the Charter of the City of *London* might be no hindrance thereunto, (by reason that unfreemen are thereby restrained from buying and selling at *Blackwell-Hall* within the said City, which was the ordinary Market-place for buying and selling of Cloth) the sign of the *George* in *Kingstreet* in *Westminster* was appointed in the said Letters Pattents, as a Market-place for all Clothiers, Merchants, and others, both free and unfree, to resort unto, as would take the benefit of the said General Permission.

But did the vent of the *Manufacture* encrease thereby ? No, but rather grew worse and worse. The Company being afraid to go on in their Trade under such an Innovation, and the Forreigner not taking it off, the *Manufacture* lay on the makers Hands to that degree, that the poor People in *Wiltshire*, and *Gloucestershire* in great numbers were ready to grow into a Mutiny ; and when all Men expected nothing less than the abolishing of the Company, as the only cause of all this Grief ; and the setting up the Merchants of the *Steel-yard* again, and establishing that general Permission, as the proper Remedy : Nothing of this followed, but the Lords of the Council sent for the Company, and after they had been heard, and had made known to them the true cause of the present

present want of Vent ; they were so satisfied in them, as to Will the said Company to proceed as formerly in their Trade, and gave them Promises of all the assistance, and countenance for the future which they could reasonably desire ; which, certainly their Lordships would not have done, if that they had seen that the late Innovation, or general Permission had brought forth, or was likely to bring forth the promised Effect, or that without Trading under regulated Societies, so great a quantity of *Woollen-Manufacture* could be vented, as was when they were maintained, and defended in the Enjoyment of their Rights and Priviledges.

The other Instance is of a much later Date, and fresh in Memory ; when, in the Year 1662, upon a complaint of the like nature, a temporary Liberty was granted to all Persons to buy, and Ship out our *Woollen-Manufacture* ; but so far was it, upon Tryal made, from answering the End proposed, that the very Clothiers themselves did in the following Year 1663, Petition that the said liberty might be revoked, and accordingly upon their Petition it was revoked, by his late Majesty, King *Charles* the Second.

And if it be now objected to us, that after all our endeavours to prove that a general Permission will not Increase the vent of our *Manufacture*, we have in the mean time no where affirmed what will, we must declare, that at present we know but one of these two, either to put a stop to its making in other Parts ; or of making it so cheap here, that we may be able to undersell our Neighbours.

The first of which we know to be impossible, the latter, we have reason to believe might give offence to those who are the Sellers of its Materials, tho' it is sufficiently evident to any common Understanding, that the cheapness of the Materials is the most proper means of encreasing the vent of our *Manufacture* ; for he that goeth cheapest to Market with a Commodity of equal Goodness, shall thereby be enabled

to sell cheaper, and by that means be assured of the first Market.

And now, tho' there be many other Arguments, and further Instances which might set forth the great National Mischiefs, and little benefit which will naturally arise from such a general Permission; yet at present we shall add no more, forasmuch as we humbly conceive what was before alleadged, is sufficient to convince all unprejudiced Persons, that a general Permission will bring great Inconveniences upon the Nation in general, as to its Trade, and when that is done, no ways answer the end proposed by it.

All which is most humbly  
submitted, &c.

Exam. per. Ince.

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**FINIS.**